

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

NR Eligible: yes X
no

Property Name: Damascus Camp Meeting Inventory Number: M:10-21

Address: Bethesda Church Road City: Damascus Zip Code:

County: Montgomery USGS Topographic Map: Damascus

Owner: RICHARD C. CULBERTSON

Tax Parcel #: P616 Tax parcel Map Number: F411 Tax Account ID Number: 00923581

Project: Elijah Broadcasting Company Radio Towers Agency: Federal Communications Commis

Site visit by MHT staff no X yes Name: Anne E. Bruder Date: 09/10/2000

Eligibility recommended X Eligibility **not** recommended

Criteria: A B X C D Considerations: A B C D E F G None

Is the property located within a historic district? X no yes Name of District:

Is district listed? no yes District Inventory Number:

Documentation on the property/district is presented in:

Project Review and Compliance Files

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*

Although these are late examples of the Methodist Camp meeting buildings, this property demonstrates the continued importance of the meeting sites to the Methodist religion in the twentieth century. We believe it is eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criterion C, architecture, and A, for its association with the camp meeting movement.

Prepared by: Catherine Grandine, Goodwin Assoc. Date Prepared: 11/03/2000

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended X Eligibility **not** recommended

Criteria A B X C D Considerations A B C D E F G None

MHT Comments:

Anne E. Bruder

January 05, 2001

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

Date

Reviewer, NR Program

Date

1. Name: Damascus Camp Meeting

2. Planning Area/Site Number: 10/21

3. M-NCPPC Atlas Reference: Map 2
Coordinate H-14

4. Address: 11250 Bethesda Church Rd.
Damascus, Md.

5. Classification Summary

Category site
Ownership private
Public Acquisition N/A
Status occupied
Accessible yes; restricted
Present use religious

Previous Survey Recording MNCPPC
Title and Date: Historic Sites Inventory

Federal State x County x Local

6. Date: 1935

7. Original Owner: Methodist Camp Meeting

8. Apparent Condition

a. excellent b. altered c. original site

9. Description: There are fifty single and double cottages arranged in three concentric east-west tiers; all face north and have white plywood exterior walls. The north (front) porch has gabled roofs supported by square corner posts. There are six-over-six double-hung windows. Each cottage has a gable roof covered by asbestos shingles.

10. Significance: The Damascus Camp Meeting is a descendant of the old Methodist camp meetings, once very popular in Montgomery County.

In order to stir up religious fervor among their parishioners, Methodist ministers in the 19th century would hold larger meetings during the summertime. The outdoors replaced a stuffy church, and provided churchgoers a religious service similar to a Sunday outing.

In 1931 the Bethesda Methodist Church sponsored a camp meeting on Bethesda Church Road in the upper county. It was called "Beall's Grove Camp Meeting" after Willie Beall, the owner of the land, and about 75-100 people camped out that year.

In 1934 Willie Beall deeded 1½ acres of his grove to the camp meeting, the only stipulation being that worldly amusements such as dancing, card playing, gambling, chance games, and the like are forever prohibited on the...land."

In 1935 a permanent tabernacle was built, and, as more land was acquired, meeting and dining halls, indoor bathrooms, and small cabins added.

In recent years the camp meeting has opened the first Thursday after the first Sunday in August, and attracts crowds of over 500 for the evening tabernacle meetings.

Candy Reed - Arch. Description

11. Researcher and date researched: Donald M. Leavitt - July 1979

12. Compiler: Eileen McGuckian

13. Date Compiled: Sept. 1979 14. Designation
Approval

15. Acreage: approx. 11 acres

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC Damascus Camp Meeting

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

11250 Bethesda Church Road

CITY, TOWN

Damascus

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

6

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery 20734

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Montgomery County Interdominational Holiness Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

Association

c/o Lansdale Burdette Route 1

CITY, TOWN

Germantown

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 20767

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE.
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #: 564

Folio #: 401

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

M-NCPPC Inventory of Historical Sites

DATE

1976

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☒ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Park Historian's Office

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland 20855

7 DESCRIPTION

M:10-21

CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Damascus Camp Meeting is set on the south side of Route 122 on a hillside amidst a grove of oak trees.

TABERNACLE

The one and a half story Tabernacle Building is the focal point of the Camp Meeting. Built on poured concrete foundations, this large wooden frame structure has white painted plywood exterior walls. The Tabernacle is entirely open on the north elevation. There is a door on the west elevation, at the southwest corner. This is wooden paneled. There are simple board-and-batten shutters covering the three window openings on the east and four window openings on the west elevation. The Tabernacle has a gable roof which is covered by asbestos shingles. There are three six-over-six double-hung windows at the east and west gable ends. A skirt roof extends around the building, this too is covered by asbestos shingles.

The interior of the Tabernacle is one large room. Three aisles divide the room into four seating sections. Eleven rows of park benches provide seating. A low stage is located at the south end of the building. The interior is unfinished and the wall studs and king post truss roof system and rafters are exposed.

COTTAGES

There are approximately fifty single and double cottages arranged in three concentric east-west tiers facing north. Built on cinderblock posts of frame construction, the exterior walls are covered by white painted plywood. Cottage 47 is an exception to this and has novelty siding. These cottages have north (front) porches with wooden flooring and two square corner posts which support the gable roof of the cottage as it extends out over the porch. The north door to the individual cottages has four lights above wooden panels. Most of these doors are covered by screened doors. On the west and south elevations there are six-over-six double-hung windows. The gable roof is covered by asbestos shingles.

The cottages have one or two rooms inside, depending on whether it is a single or a double cottage. The interiors are refinished and the wall studs and roof joists and rafters are clearly visible. The floors are narrow wooden boards.

GIRLS' DORMITORY BUILDING

The two story, four bay by two bay girls' dormitory is built on cinderblock posts and has a cinderblock basement at the south end. It has wooden framing and novelty siding. The north (front) and east (side) doors are both four lights over two wooden panels. The north door is reached by one wooden step. The east door may be reached by ascending, north to south, ten wooden steps. There is a fire escape to the second story at the northeast corner of east elevation. This door is wooden paneled. There are six-over-six double-hung windows throughout the dormitory. The building has a gable roof covered by green asbestos shingles.

(Continued on Attachment Sheet A)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

M:10-21

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
	<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			Local History

SPECIFIC DATES 1935 (Tabernacle) BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Damascus Camp Meeting is a descendant of the old Methodist camp meetings, once very popular in Montgomery County.

In order to stir up religious fervor among their parishioners, Methodist ministers in the 19th century would hold larger meetings during the summertime. The outdoors replaced a stuffy church, and provided churchgoers a religious service similar to a Sunday outing.

The earliest Montgomery County camp meeting grounds, such as Hopewell Chapel near Damascus and Federal Chapel at Colesville, were no more than "brush arbor pulpits and mourner's benches" ¹ under a canopy of trees. In 1873 a Methodist meeting ground was formed at Washington Grove on the Metropolitan Branch of the B & O Railroad. This new facility was quite different from its predecessors. Permanent meeting and dining halls replaced cleared spaces in a grove of trees, and cabins, many of them quite elaborate, sprung up around the grounds. When the camp was in session people would ride out in horse-drawn buggies or on the train from the city to enjoy a day in the countryside, social interaction, and a good dosing of religion. Other sites similar to Washington Grove included Emory Grove for blacks, and the elaborate Chataqua grounds at Glen Echo for those not so inclined to hell-and-brimstone preaching.

Camp meetings lost their popularity in this area soon after the turn of the century, and Washington Grove closed in 1924.

In 1931 the Bethesda Methodist Church sponsored a camp meeting on Bethesda Church Road in the upper county. It was called "Beall's Grove Camp Meeting" after Willie Beall, the owner of the land, and about 75-100 people camped out that year.

In 1934 Willie Beall deeded 1½ acres of his grove to the camp meeting, the only stipulation being that worldly amusements such as dancing, card playing, gambling, chance games, and the like are forever prohibited on the....land." ²

In 1935 a permanent tabernacle was built, and, as more land was acquired, meeting and dining halls, indoor bathrooms, and small cabins added.

In recent years the camp meeting has opened the first Thursday after the first Sunday in August, and attracts crowds of over 500 for the evening tabernacle meetings.

FOOTNOTES:

1 MacMaster and Hiebert, A Grateful Remembrance, p.212.

2 Montgomery County Land Records, Deed 564/401 (3/16/1934).

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Land Records of Montgomery County, Md.
 MacMaster, Richard K. and Ray Eldon Hiebert. A Grateful Remembrance.
 Rockville, Md: Montgomery County Government and the Montgomery County
 Historical Society, 1976.
 Scharf, Thomas J., History of Western Maryland, vol. 1, Philadelphia:
 Lewis H. Everts, 1882.
 CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 11 acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Located on the SW side of Bethesda Church Road approx. 2 miles NW of
 Route 27.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Donald M. LeavittCandy Reed, Architectural Description

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Sugarloaf Regional TrailsJuly 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Box 87926-4510

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

DickersonMaryland 20753

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created
 by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the
 Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA,
 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information
 and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringe-
 ment of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
 The State House, 21 State Circle
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 (301) 267-1338

Dickerson, MD 20753
 (301) 926-4510

DINING ROOM/GIRLS' DORMITORY

The two and a half story, six bay by five bay dining room and girls' dormitory building is built on cinderblock and poured concrete foundations into the hillside. It is a wooden frame structure covered on its exterior walls by white painted plywood. There is a poured concrete slab uncovered porch on the north (front) elevation. At the northeast corner of the north elevation there is a pair of fifteen-light French doors. At the northwest corner of the north elevation there is a door composed of four lights above wooden panels below.

The dining room building has a gable roof covered by asbestos shingles. The roof rafters are exposed at the eaves. There are three shed-roofed dormer windows on the east and west elevations. The modern windows are two horizontal lights over two horizontal lights and are double hung. On the east, west, and north elevations of the first floor there are four window openings which are covered by plywood shutters.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Damascus Camp Meeting

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Rte. 122

CITY, TOWN

Browningsville

VICINITY OF

(Damascus)

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE

☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
☒ ACCESSIBLE
☐ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Damascus Camp Meeting (Baptist Church?) Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

Rte. 122

CITY, TOWN

Damascus

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code
Maryland**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Montgomery County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Liber #:

Folio #:

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE
Maryland**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
 SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

M:10-21

CONDITION
☒ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR
☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE
☒ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE
☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This is a series of small, frame cabins clustered together in a scenic, wooded grove. There is no real architectural value, but it is similar in styling to religious camps of the 19th Century.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

M:10-21

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Interesting, primarily because of the scenic mountain view setting and the fact that it is the only camp of this type still active in the area.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

M:10-21

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

1/22/74

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael F. Dwyer, Senior Park Historian

ORGANIZATION

M-NCPPC

DATE

1/22/74

STREET & NUMBER

8787 Georgia Ave.

TELEPHONE

589-1480

CITY OR TOWN

Silver Spring

STATE

Maryland

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RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



M: #10-21

NAME DAMASCUS CAMP MEETING

LOCATION Rt. 122 DAMASCUS, Md

FACADE LOOKING W

PHOTO TAKEN 1/23/74 M. DWYER



m: #10-21

NAME DAMASCUS CAMP MEETING + BENNETT CREEK VALLEY

LOCATION RTE. 122, W. OF DAMASCUS, MD.

FACADE LOOKING NW

PHOTO TAKEN 1/22/74
m. RUDYER



M: #10-21

NAME DAMASCUS CAMP MEETING

LOCATION Rt 122 DAMASCUS, MD

FACADE N

PHOTO TAKEN 1/22/74 M. DWYER